

The sections of the Plan build on one another in similar fashion to its development. Within the **Approach** section are summaries of key processes and exercises that were carried out in order to develop the Plan, including organizational frameworks, partnerships and stakeholder involvement, and the species prioritization process. Next, in **The State of the State** we provide an overview of the condition of the state's natural resources, threats affecting species and habitats in the state, key conservation partners, and challenges faced in program administration and efficacy. In **Statewide Conservation Strategies** we address four broad-scale conservation issues, including strategies on urban wildlife issues, private lands wildlife management, land conservation priorities, and education and outreach. Following is the most detailed chapter of the report, entitled **Species and Habitat Assessments & Conservation Strategies**. In this chapter, we feature the conservation needs of terrestrial resources within habitats across the three ecoregions of the state (the Southern Blue Ridge, Piedmont, and Mid-Atlantic Coastal Plain), aquatic resources within the 17 river basins in the state, and marine resources at our coast (this section is largely based on the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries Coastal Habitat Protection Plan). Next, we address cross-cutting conservation needs among habitats and basins within **Synthesis of Conservation Priorities**. In **Status and Trends Monitoring** we discuss species and habitat monitoring needs. We outline ways to monitor the implementation of conservation activities, adapt to new information, and revise future iterations of the Plan in our final chapter, **Implementation Monitoring, Adaptive Management, & Review and Revision Procedures**. Last, we present **Acknowledgements**, a comprehensive **Glossary**, a **Key to Abbreviations and Acronyms**, and multiple **Appendices**.

This document was developed at the strategic level, meaning that the implementation of activities identified in the Plan must go one step farther to consider the operational details of involving partners, setting explicit objectives and targets, detailing monitoring protocols, etc. We have organized the format and content of the Plan to provide maximum utility as a resource to set conservation priorities. The Plan is designed to flow from beginning to end, but individual chapters and sections can also be used independently, as stand-alone documents. For example, users may turn to a particular habitat or basin section to review priority needs and recommendations pertaining specifically to their region or expertise area (e.g., the Catawba River basin, maritime forest habitat). We hope that the information provided within each chapter and section translates into clear and objective conservation planning at that level.

Our Plan has been nearly three years in development. The development process was strengthened by the input, feedback, and participation of hundreds of stakeholders across the state (stakeholder representation extended across more than 15 state and federal agencies, 12 non-governmental organizations, five universities, and four private companies). But the completion of this first edition is just the beginning. The Plan is a work in progress, and will continue to evolve during implementation and through future revisions. Though the funding that initiated development of the state Plan continues to be allocated on an annual basis (making long-term planning difficult), there is hope across the nation that our state Strategies will clearly demonstrate to Congress the need for increased and permanent Federal fish and wildlife conservation funding in the future. Regardless of funding sources, the partnerships and collaborative efforts that this Plan fosters should lead to significant accomplishments in the conservation of North Carolina's wildlife resources.